

TESTIMONY OF  
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Before the  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE AND  
CONSUMER PROTECTION**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE HEARING ON

“BREEDING, DRUGS, AND BREAKDOWNS:  
THE STATE OF THOROUGHBRED HORSERACING AND THE WELFARE OF  
THE THOROUGHBRED RACEHORSE”

June 19, 2008

Ms. Chairwoman, Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today.

When I was contacted by one of your staffers and asked to speak here today I agreed because I wanted to share my insights and points of view on some of these issues and I hope that I can be helpful here.

I also hope that I was not asked to be here because of some of the problems I have had in the past. I hope your staff people were sincere in inviting me because they valued my insight. I want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

I also ask for your patience today. I'm not always the best at explaining things. I've been taking care of horses all my life. I dropped out of high school more than 30 years ago to take care of horses and sometimes I think I do better with horses than with people.

As you may know, I am the trainer for Big Brown, the very talented horse who won the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness this year. Despite my best efforts and those of the team of people around him, he did not win the Belmont Stakes but that's horseracing. Big Brown is healthy and our plan right now is to keep him racing this summer and fall.

In addition to Big Brown, I am responsible for approximately 150 horses at any one time – 110 in active training and 40-50 at various farms getting ready to race.

My operation has about 75 people, including grooms, stable hands, exercise riders, blacksmiths and vets, who care for our horse on a daily basis.

While some people's focus is on the big days, we care about our horses and keeping them safe 365 days a year. Taking care of horses is a way of life for us. Our horses get the best care we can give them. They are gifted athletes and are trained to give their best performance when they run.

During the Triple Crown, I was asked several questions about my past and I expect those will come up today so let me address them.

My barn has been penalized in the past for medication violations. I was suspended and fined five years ago when traces of a prohibited substance, mepivacaine, turned up in a test for one of my horses. I said then that we don't use it and I don't know how it happened.

We have also had violations when legal, permitted, therapeutic medications have shown up in race day tests because they were given to the horse too close to the race. That's something that many trainers in the country have had to deal with. But I take responsibility for the condition of my horses.

During the Triple Crown I told the media that my horses are given Winstrol on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. This is an FDA approved medication and is within the current rules of racing in most states. It is something we started a few years ago at the recommendation of one of our vets.

People have asked me why I do it. My observation is that it helps the horses eat better. Their coats brighten. They're more alert. It helps them train.

Having said that, our barn has won hundreds of races with horses that weren't on steroids. Earlier this winter, I won two one million dollar races in Dubai, where steroids are prohibited. If steroids are banned in the United States, we'll stop using them.

I also said that I'm not qualified to speak to the science of it. For that, I would suggest that you talk to the vets and scientific experts.

Thank you.